

STOP POPULATION GROWTH NOW

Newsletter

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Convenor's Report (Bob Couch)

Our party was officially launched on April 27 with just four members. As I write this our membership has already grown to fifty with a further thirty two waiting to be finalised.

A lot of time in these early days has been taken up with ensuring that the party has a sound foundation. Setting up the administrative structure has been time consuming but essential.

Initial responses have been very encouraging. The initial media release, which went to 800 outlets around Australia, resulted in 5 separate live radio interviews and 8 press interviews, with subsequent publication of stories in The Advertiser, Mount Barker Courier, and the Macquarie Chronicle (NSW), as well as mentions in other national newspapers.

We held a well attended public meeting in Mount Barker on 24th May and have resolved to run a series of public meetings over the next three months both to recruit new members but also to enable residents, if they wish, to use the party as a vehicle to organize their opposition to proposed housing and retail developments in several affected areas of Adelaide, and country townships.

This Newsletter refers primarily to activity in South Australia. If you are from interstate, please understand that our organization is national, and we will be initiating and supporting activities in other states as opportunities arise. If you have problems in your area, and you think we can help, let us know.

Thank you very much to those who have joined and/or made donations. We really appreciate your support.

For those who are still undecided, we realise you may be cautious about joining a political party. However, it is the only means to put the politicians who are not listening to you, under real pressure. If you join, you will not be required to do anything, except forward your application. Of course, your further involvement will be welcomed with open arms, but that would be up to each individual. Please consider.

Policy - some thoughts Part 1 (John Tons)

One of the reasons the four of us (Bob Couch, Michael Lardelli, John Coulter and myself) came together to form this party is that all of us have been concerned about the absence of awareness of the impact that population has on all aspects of government policy.

As the party grows we will need the members to become involved in designing brief statements about the principles that will inform our stance on different areas of public policy.

The suggestions below have no official status – they are presented for your consideration and comment as part of the process of developing more detailed statements that we should officially adopt.

Sustainable means what exactly?

Our party is called Stop Population Growth Now. It is, of course, not possible to provide a complete understanding of our policy in four words. Therefore your committee has formulated the following statement to better describe our fundamental stance:-

*“The present population of 22 million is environmentally unsustainable and is causing very significant social and economic problems. Further population growth will make all these things worse. Only **stopping population growth** as quickly as possible will help reduce this damage”.*

What are your thoughts?

Population

Migration is the main driver of our population growth – our website makes our policy objectives quite clear – however, we need to consider that population pressure is also produced by a range of other factors such as tourism – is there a limit to the number of tourists that we can have in any given year? Should holders of Australian passports who are permanent residents of other nations be given automatic right of settlement? Should we declare an immediate moratorium on all further land development? Should we be developing green belts? Should we be providing incentives for local government to return land to agricultural use?

None of these are easy questions – sometimes when we ask questions that to some may be described as heretical (i.e. questioning whether unlimited tourism is a good thing.) we can develop a more nuanced position on such questions.

Peak Oil

We are the first generation that has to face the question that the resources that are at the very foundation of our lifestyle are about to run out. Scientists have been warning that apart from oil there are other resources such as phosphate which are nearing the end of their life. Australia needs both oil and phosphate to maintain our lifestyle. We need to develop policies that enable us to manage the transition to a world where these basic resources are no longer available.

Primary Industry

Population pressure means loss of bio diversity and loss of agricultural land. However, there is another danger that we face – farmers’ incomes have declined by about 22% over the last 10 years at the same time costs have gone up. We are facing a major crisis in that for far too many young people farming is not an attractive proposition. We need our farmers.

Education

The reason there is pressure from some quarters for skilled migration is due to the fact that we are not skilling our own population. We need to have a genuine education revolution; one that actually delivers the skills that Australia needs.

Food Security

Michael Lardelli has written a number of articles on the subject. You will find them here:

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=10448&page=0>

and

<http://www.energybulletin.net/node/52706> -.

Upcoming Events (John Tons)

Over the next two months we will be focusing on Community Meetings.

We are using the S.A. Government's 30 year plan as our vehicle to encourage people across the state to work together to present one voice of opposition to the government.

The problem is that this government has just been reelected for another four years.

So what can we do?

The main driver for all population growth is the Federal Government therefore a strong Senate presence can act as a brake on population growth.

In addition we can work with local communities to make this year's council elections a referendum on the thirty year plan. The key feature of the 30 year plan is that it effectively takes planning out of the hands of local council – a strong voter turn out combined with electing councilors who are opposed to rezoning land will be an important starting point.

No doubt there are other ideas that communities will have – by working together we can make a difference!

If you want to be involved contact John Tons : contact@stoppopulationgrowthnow.com